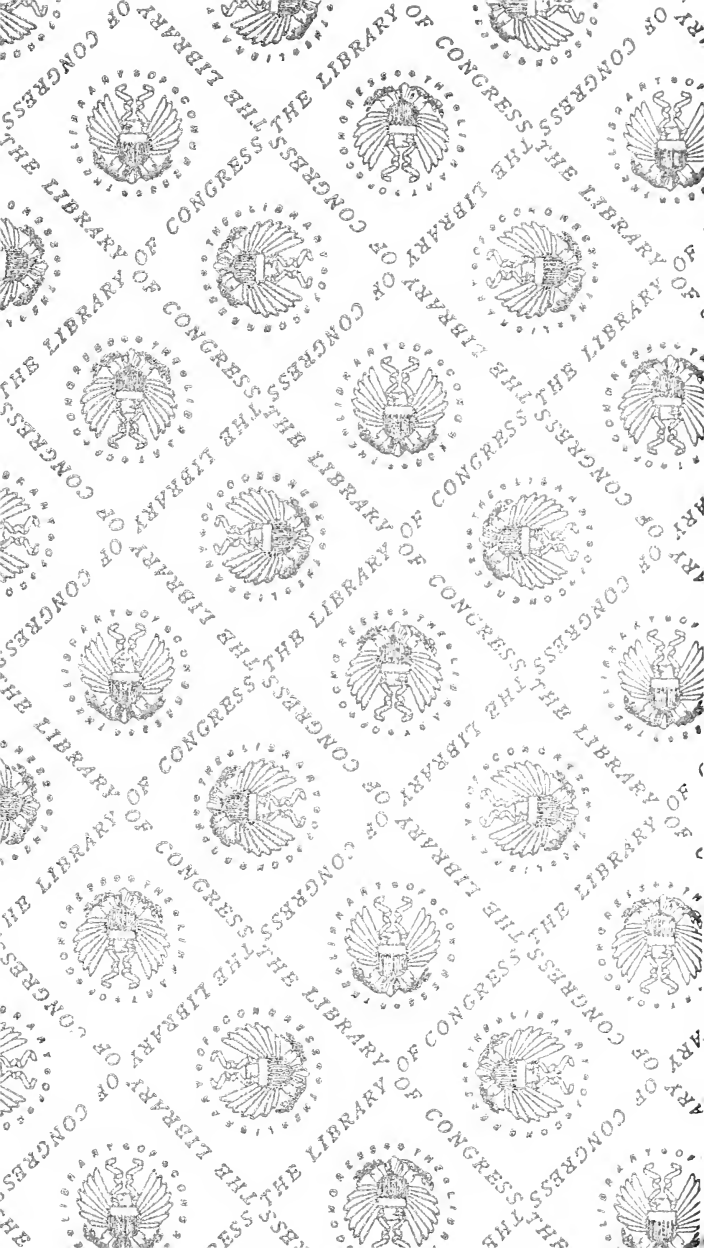


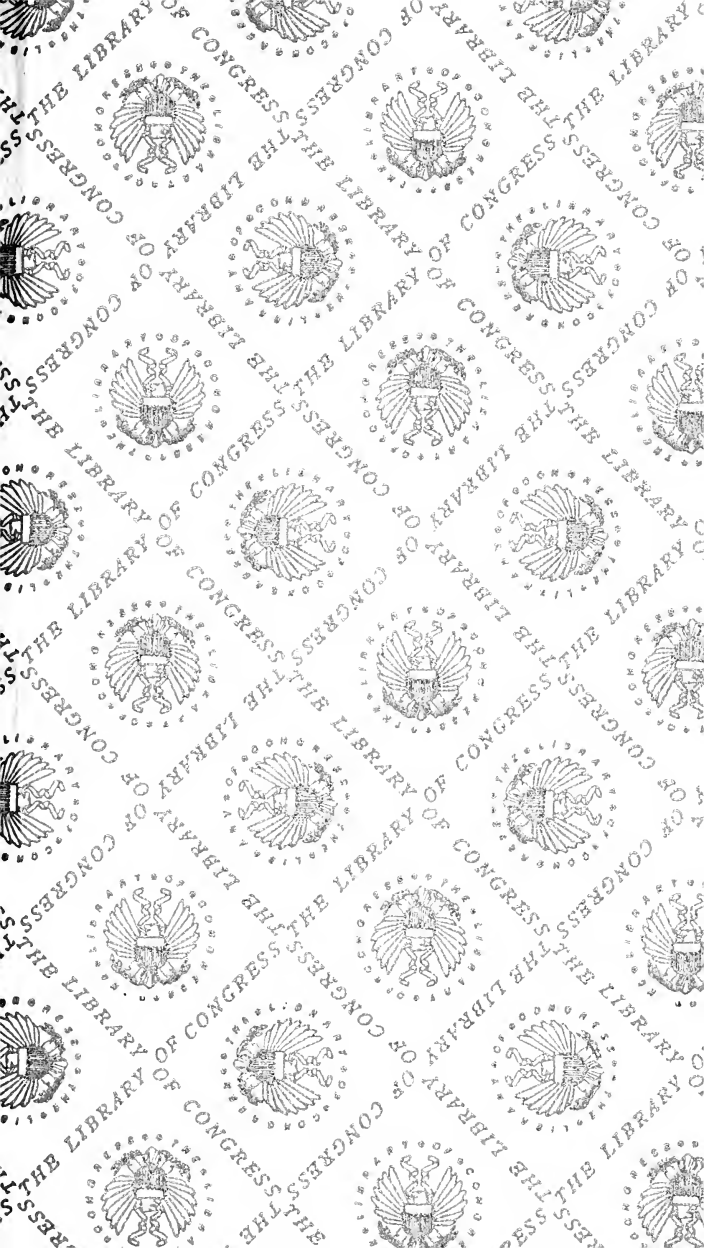
E 443
.W572

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



00001744793





No. 40.

PREMIUM TRACT, to which \$200 was awarded by a Committee consisting of Rev. F. Wayland, D. D., Rt. Rev. T. M. Clark, D. D., of R. I., C. Stoddart, Esq., Mass., and Rev. D. Brown, D. D., of Scotland.

THE FAMILY RELATION,

AS AFFECTED BY

S L A V E R Y.

W. L. G.
" "First Pure, then Peaceable."

OPPRESSION has existed in every age of the world. Even now, eighteen hundred years since the religion of Jesus was first published to mankind, its beautiful representation that the strong were made strong precisely that they might serve and help the weak, is little understood, and less acted upon.

The particular form of oppression known as American Slavery, was commenced in what all admit to have been an unjustifiable manner. The original seizure of men, women and children, on the coast of Africa, for the purpose of bringing them to this country and selling them as slaves, was a system of brutal violence, authorized by no law, and condemned alike by justice and humanity. Those who committed this wickedness are dead, and gone to their account. For their acts, no man now living is responsible.

After this system had been some time in operation as a matter of fact, it began to be recognized and regulated by law; and, in whatever lawless violence slavery first commenced, it now exists, and is carried on, under the control of an accurately defined system of laws. To write intelligently, therefore, about slavery as it now is, we must inquire how the existing laws constitute and define it.

Twenty-nine years ago, there was published in Philadelphia, *"A Sketch of the Laws relating to Slavery in the*

1,0065

L 175
W 572

several States of the United States of America; by George M. Stroud." This volume has been ever since regarded as the best authority upon the subject of which it treats, and its accuracy and impartiality, so far as we know, have never been questioned. But in the lapse of so many years, changes and additions have been made to these laws; and to meet the want thence arising, Judge Stroud has published a second edition of his "*Sketch of the Laws relating to Slavery*,"—"with some alterations and considerable additions," in the autumn of the present year, 1856. This book therefore will show us, precisely and accurately, what Slavery is, as now established by law, and what authority every slaveholder is legally authorized to exercise. Such differences as exist between the statutes of the different States are carefully specified in the book; but a substantial resemblance exists between all the slave codes, sufficient fully to authorize the following general statement of

WHAT AMERICAN SLAVERY IS AS ESTABLISHED BY LAW.

I. The master may determine the kind, and degree, and time of labor to which the slave shall be subjected.

II. The master may supply the slave with such food and clothing only, both as to quantity and quality, as he may think proper or find convenient.

III. The master may, at his discretion, inflict any punishment upon the person of his slave.

IV. All the power of the master over his slave, may be exercised not by himself only in person, but by any one whom he may depute as his agent.

V. Slaves have no legal rights of property in things, real or personal, but whatever they may acquire, belongs *in point of law*, to their masters.

VI. The slave, being a *personal chattel*, is at all times liable to be sold absolutely, or mortgaged, or leased, at the will of his master.

VII. He may also be sold by process of law for the satisfaction of the debts of a living, or the debts and bequests of a deceased master, at the suit of creditors or legatees.

VIII. A slave cannot be a party before a judicial tribunal in any species of action against his master, no matter how atrocious may have been the injury received from him.

IX. Slaves cannot redeem themselves, nor obtain a change of masters, though cruel treatment may have rendered such change necessary for their personal safety.

X. Slaves being objects of *property*, if injured by third persons, their owners may bring suit, and recover damages to themselves for the injury done to their slaves.

XI. Slaves can make no contract, not even matrimony.

XII. Slavery is hereditary and perpetual.

XIII. A slave cannot be a witness against a white person, either in a civil or criminal cause.

XIV. A slave cannot be a party to a civil suit.

XV. The benefits of education are withheld from the slave.

XVI. The means for moral and religious education are not granted to the slave; on the contrary, the efforts of the humane and charitable to supply these wants, are discountenanced by law.

XVII. Submission is required of the slave, not to the will of his master only, but to that of all other white persons.

XVIII. The penal codes of the slaveholding States bear much more severely upon slaves than upon white persons for the same offence.

XIX. Trial of slaves upon criminal accusations is, in most of the slave States, different from that which is observed in respect to free white persons, and the difference is injurious to the slave, and inconsistent with the rights of humanity.

Such are the powers of the master and the disabilities of the slave, as *established by law* throughout the slave region generally.

We know, however, that severe and inequitable laws sometimes stand, a dead letter, on the statute book, long after they have ceased to be put in force. To be assured,

therefore, respecting the actually existing character of slavery, we need to make the further inquiry,

ARE SUCH SLAVE CASES AS HAPPEN TO COME BEFORE THE COURTS OF THE SLAVE STATES DECIDED WITH A RIGOR CORRESPONDING TO THE SEVERITY OF THE CODE ABOVE QUOTED?

As a reply to this inquiry, we quote the ruling of various Southern judges, in cases actually tried by them.

"*Souther vs. the Commonwealth of Virginia*," 7 Grat-tan, 673, 1851. In delivering the opinion of the court, Judge Field said:

"It has been decided by this court in *Turner's case*, 5 Rand., that the owner of a slave, for the malicious, cruel, and excessive beating of his own slave, can not be indicted. It is the policy of the law, in respect to the relation of master and slave, and for the sake of securing proper subordination and obedience on the part of the slave, to protect the master from prosecution in all such cases, [of punishment not resulting in death,] even if the whipping and punishment be malicious, cruel, and excessive."

In another case of cruel and unreasonable punishment not resulting in death, "*State vs. Mann*," Decem. term, 1829, 2 Devereaux's North Carolina Rep. 263, the opinion of the court, delivered by Judge Ruffin, afterward Chief Justice of the State of North Carolina, contained the following statements:

"The end [of slavery] is the profit of the master, his security, and the public safety; the subject, one doomed, in his own person and his posterity, to live without knowledge and without the capacity to make any thing his own, and to toil that another may reap the fruits. What moral considerations shall be addressed to such a being, to convince him what it is impossible but that the most stupid must feel and know can never be true—that he is thus to labor upon a principle of natural duty, or for the sake of his own personal happiness? Such services can only be expected from one who has no will of his own; who

surrenders his will in implicit obedience to that of another. Such obedience is the consequence only of uncontrolled authority over the body. There is nothing else which can operate to produce this effect. THE POWER OF THE MASTER MUST BE ABSOLUTE TO RENDER THE SUBMISSION OF THE SLAVE PERFECT. I most freely confess my sense of the harshness of this proposition. I feel it as deeply as any man can. AND, AS A PRINCIPLE OF MORAL RIGHT, EVERY PERSON IN HIS RETIREMENT MUST REPUDIATE IT. But, in the actual condition of things, it must be so. There is no remedy. This discipline is INHERENT IN THE RELATION OF MASTER AND SLAVE. Judgment entered for the defendant."

In "State of South Carolina vs. Mauer," 2 Hill's Rep., 453, Judge O'Neal says :

"The criminal offence of assault and battery can not, at common law, be committed upon the person of a slave. For notwithstanding (for some purposes) a slave is regarded by law as a person, yet generally he is a mere chattel personal, and his right of personal protection belongs to his master, who can maintain an action of trespass for the battery of his slave. There can be, therefore, no offence against the State for a *mere beating of a slave unaccompanied with any circumstances of cruelty*, or an attempt to kill and murder. The peace of the State *is not thereby broken*; for a slave is not generally regarded as legally capable of being within the peace of the State. He is not a citizen, and is not in that character entitled to her protection."

We have abstained from describing the cruelties inflicted in the cases above cited, because we wish to appeal to reason without painful excitement of feeling. Those cases are fair specimens of their class, and they show that the judicial decisions of slave cases *do* correspond in rigor to the laws. If then we remember that the slave can not bring any action whatever on his own account, and that he is likely to find no friend who will do this for him in opposition to his master, and that both the laws and the ordinary course of their

administration, discourage any appeal to them in behalf of a slave, it will be sufficiently obvious that only a very small proportion of the cases of cruelty inflicted upon a slave, will come before the law at all for redress.

Before being competent to judge, therefore, of the actual condition of the slave, under the rigorous laws, and the rigorous administration above cited, we must consider another question, namely—

DO SLAVEHOLDERS ACTUALLY PRACTICE THE INJUSTICE WHICH THEIR LAWS ALLOW?

There is in every community a class of men better than the law; of men who, from natural nobleness of character, or high moral training, will scorn to use such opportunities of doing wrong with impunity as the imperfection of human laws may present to them. And especially must such a law exist where the law is so unjust as systematically to favor the strong at the expense of the weak—the rich, at the expense of the poor—the intelligent, at the expense of the ignorant; and where the very judge who pronounces sentence according to law feels constrained to declare from the bench his sense of the injustice of the law, while he confesses that no system of rules *less* unjust, and no administration of them *less* rigorous, would effectually establish the dominion of the master over the slave. In such a community, there will certainly be some men and women *better than the law*.

On the other hand, in such a community, as in every other, there will be a class of persons *no* better than the law; of persons who will be prevented by no scruple of honor, or justice, or humanity, or morality, or religion, from using, against those who are so unfortunate as to be within their power, every advantage which the law allows them. And this class will necessarily be larger than the former, since the uncultivated in manners and morals are more numerous than the cultivated in every community, especially where, as in the slave States, there are *few* free schools.

It is owing to the interposition of members of the class first mentioned, that *any* cases, like those, the judicial decisions of which we have quoted as given in favor of

the master, come before the courts. Well known as the rigor of the law is in that region, upon that subject, *some one* must have thought, in presenting each of those cases for trial, that the frightful excess of cruelty displayed in it, gave *some chance* of a decision favorable to the abused slave. If in so many *such* cases those compassionate hopes were disappointed, how numerous must be the cases where an amount of cruelty somewhat less passes as an ordinary transaction, unknown even to the few persons who would attempt to call the perpetrator to account.

We will assume, however, that the great majority in a slaveholding community, (as certainly in every other community,) consists of persons intermediate between the two classes already described; persons who will ordinarily treat their slaves with a certain amount of indulgence, and who will use the extreme rigor permitted by the laws only under circumstances of peculiar temptation. We need only look at the many kinds, and the constantly recurring occasions, of special temptation to the *absolute master* of fifty men, boys, women, and girls, to see that the actual cases of abuse of power must be very frequent.

To notice, for instance, only three of the many forms of special and powerful temptation, how numerous must be the cases of abuse of absolute and irresponsible power, occurring within the license of the law, under each of them.

The temptation of sudden anger. Think, for a moment, how frequently *we* should commit injustice, if, with our amount of moral training and self-control, the law of the land authorized us to inflict, on the spot, just what kind and just what amount of punishment we pleased, upon a stupid, or careless, or wasteful, or impudent, or lying, or cheating servant. But, from the very nature of slavery, from its necessary operation upon both blacks and whites, the servants under that system must be more faulty in all these respects, and the masters less accustomed to self-control, than under freedom. And anger not proceeding to the destruction of life, can always be gratified by the master or mistress, upon the slave, with absolute impunity.

The temptation of lust. How shall a few feeble words

tell the fearful amount, and the weighty significance of the truth upon this great subject? Think what is the too well known extent of licentiousness at the North—in city and country, among old and young; think of the difficulties encountered, and the expense lavished, the risks run, the laws violated, and the disgrace hazarded in the pursuit of illicit indulgence there; then think what it *must be* in the South, where *all* these obstacles are removed; where the temptation is always at hand—the legal authority absolute—the actual power complete—the vice a profitable one, in a country where men can and do sell their own children in the market, and get the highest price for the lightest color—and the custom so universal as to bring with it no disgrace; and, lastly, see the statistics of actual vice in the 800,000 mulattoes of the South, nine hundred and ninety-nine out of every thousand of them a child of mere brutal lust—a disgrace to the father and a misfortune to the mother.

The temptation of pecuniary gain. We must look at the force of this temptation, not only as it exists in the worst class of men, not only where it is unchecked by any wish or attempt to do right, but where circumstances of necessity, more or less urgent, co-operating with the laws and customs of the country, persuade a man or a woman to do something that they have long avoided and shrunk from, because they felt it to be unjust and cruel. Their poverty, but not their will, consents; and, without doubt, the slaveholder who carries off a man or a woman, a boy or a girl, where they will never more see father, mother, brother, or sister, very often pays the poverty rather than the will of the seller. But the sales are constantly made, notwithstanding.

Many a man who, on being offered eighteen hundred dollars for the body and soul of a girl whose market value *as a servant* is only eight hundred, would indignantly say, Is thy servant a dog, that he should do this thing? will do it a year afterwards, when the urgent necessity for money comes. He will blush, he will feel disgraced in his own eyes, he will avoid looking in the face, or hearing the entreaties of his victim, but he will do it. Is it not time to make some change, when the

very *laws* of a country are temptations, instead of obstructions, to sin?

We have now considered what slavery is *by law*, what it is *in judicial administration*, and what it is *by the practice of slaveholders generally*. The answer to one more question will complete the very brief statement we can here make of slavery *as it is*, and prepare us to inquire how it affects the family relation.

DOES THE CHURCH SET ITSELF AGAINST THAT SYSTEM OF INJUSTICE WHICH WE HAVE SEEN TO BE SUPPORTED BY THE LAWS AND SOCIAL CUSTOMS OF THE SOUTH? DO THE SOUTHERN CLERGY PREACH AGAINST IT, THE SOUTHERN CHURCHES FORBID IT, THE SOUTHERN CHURCH MEMBERS ABSTAIN FROM IT?

Alas! all these practice slaveholding, and defend it. More than 600,000 slaves are held in bondage at the South, by men professing to be Christians. Not only is a man's reputation in the church absolutely unaffected by the holding, and buying and selling of slaves, but, if he chooses to take the trouble, he can find elaborate arguments in favor of slavery, written and printed by clergymen, in every slaveholding State; and in many of the States, decisions of ecclesiastical bodies, in favor, not only of slavery as a whole, but of some of its worst constituent parts. Here are a few of these cases.

The Shiloh Baptist Association, which met at Gourdvine, Va., Sept., 1846, after the discussion of the question, Is a servant, whose husband or wife has been sold by his or her master into a distant country, to be permitted to marry again? voted, "That in view of the circumstances in which servants in this country are placed, it is better to permit servants thus circumstanced to take another husband or wife."

The Savannah River Association, after discussing the same question, voted the same answer, and gave this reason for it: "The slaves are not free agents, and a dissolution by death is not more entirely without their consent and beyond their control than by such separation." Here the right of a church member to sell husbands and wives apart *without their consent*, is taken for granted without discussion.

The Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, in 1840, on motion of Rev. Dr. Few, of Georgia, "Resolved, That it is inexpedient and unjustifiable for any preacher to permit colored persons to give testimony against white persons, in any State where they are denied that privilege by law." By this rule, which is now a part of the discipline of the church, more than 80,000 of its colored members are denied the right to testify against a white member *in any case whatsoever*.

The Georgia Methodist Annual Conference declares that "slavery, as it exists in the United States, is not a moral evil."

The Charleston Union Presbytery, of South Carolina, voted that "the holding of slaves, so far from being a *sin* in the sight of God, is nowhere condemned in his holy Word."

The Society for the advancement of Christianity in South Carolina published, as a religious tract, for gratuitous distribution, two sermons entitled "Rights and Duties of Slaveholders," in which occur the following sentences.

"No man or set of men in our day, unless they can produce a new revelation from heaven, are entitled to pronounce slavery wrong." * * "Slavery, as it exists at the present day, is agreeable to the order of Divine Providence." These sermons were written by Rev. George W. Freeman, preached in Raleigh, North Carolina, and specially requested for publication by L. S. Ives, bishop of that diocese.

The Charleston Baptist Association "does not consider that the Holy Scriptures have made the fact of slavery a question of morals at all."

Rev. James Smylie, of Mississippi, says, "The 25th chapter of Leviticus clearly and unequivocally establishes the fact that slavery was sanctioned by God himself, and that buying, selling, holding, and bequeathing slaves, as property, are regulations established by himself."

This same statement was also voted by the Mississippi Presbytery, and also by the Amity Presbytery, of La.

We may judge of the prevalence of slaveholding among Southern church members in all the principal sects, by

the following statement of the same Rev. James Smylie, in answer to a remonstrance against slavery :

"If the buying, selling, and holding of a slave, *for the sake of gain*, is, as you say, a heinous sin and scandal, then verily three-fourths of all Episcopalians, Methodists, Baptists, and Presbyterians, in the eleven [slaveholding] States of the Union are of the devil."

The same clergyman declares, in the same pamphlet, that the laws of Mississippi and Louisiana, which prohibit, under heavy penalties, the teaching of slaves to read, "meet the approbation of the religious part of the reflecting community."

Rev. Dr. Fuller, Baptist, says, "I find my Bible condemning the abuses of slavery, but permitting the system itself."

Rev. Thomas S. Witherspoon, Presbyterian, says, "I draw my warrant from the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, to hold the slave in bondage."

Here, as in other departments of this great subject, for want of room, we can give only the briefest specimens of an immense mass of evidence. But enough has been given to show that the Southern Church supports slavery as thoroughly as the State.

Having now established, by documentary evidence, the following points about slavery, namely,

That it consists in the holding and using, buying and selling of men, women and children *as property* :

That this claim of property in human beings supersedes and nullifies all right of husband to wife, and of wife to husband, and of both to their children, and of all to the means of education, free locomotion, and property in the avails of their labor: and

That this enormous injustice is supported by the laws of the State, the customs of the people, the teaching of the clergy, and the laws and customs of the church :

We have now to consider, **HOW DOES THIS INSTITUTION AFFECT THE FAMILY RELATION?**

Does not the question answer itself? Does not such a system necessarily annihilate, to the slave, that beautiful, blessed relation, which *we* understand by "the family," and immensely deteriorate it to the master?

Let us look at it more closely. The primary constituent relations of the Family are those of husband and wife, parent and child.

HUSBAND AND WIFE.

We will take it for granted that the principles properly

regulating this relation are found in the following precepts of Scripture :

“It is not good that man should be alone.”

“Let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.”

“What God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.”

It is obvious that the slave knows nothing of the relation which the Bible thus recognizes, defines, and enjoins. The laws and the customs, of both Church and State, debar him alike from its beauty, its sacredness, and its advantage.

The slave laws decide that “A slave can make no contract, not even matrimony.”

Hence the slave can have no wife. He is allowed to cohabit with a slave woman, because the master's interest is doubly favored by it; in the production of children, which are money in his pocket, and in the formation of a new tie to keep the slave submissive, and prevent his running away. The slave woman has, and can have, no husband. The whole policy of the slave system is to induce her to bear children, the more the better. But the law is absolutely indifferent as to who is the father of a slave woman's child. It follows the condition of the mother, and is money in her master's pocket. But this mother can not have a husband, sharing with her the delightful right and privilege to dwell together “until death them do part.” As soon as it becomes the master's pecuniary interest to part them, the laws and customs, of both State and Church, allow him to do so, and actually interfere no more in the question by what male partner the separated slave woman shall bear another child, than in the case of a cow or a mare owned by the same master.

Do you know, Christian reader, that no slave was ever prosecuted for bigamy, or for fornication, or for adultery? And do you know the reason, namely, that the law does not recognize them as capable of committing these crimes? The law no more attempts to regulate the increase, by generation, of slave property, than of horse and cattle property. As far as the law is concerned, the master regulates both precisely as he chooses. If he chooses himself to be the father of every slave child born

on his estate, he thereby commits no offence against the law; and, amazing as it may seem, the Church, by an express rule, refuses to receive the testimony of a slave woman wronged in this way, against her master or any other white man. The master, and the master's sons, and the overseer, and the driver, have the female slaves of the estate always in their power, and subject to the influence either of bribes, or threats, or actual violence. And, more than this, if *any* white man, failing to obtain her consent, ravishes a female slave, the law forbids her to lift her hand against him in self-defence, and provides no means whatever, either for her defence or his punishment; and if she turns to the Church for protection, even if the ravisher as well as herself be a member of it, the Church refuses to take her testimony against him. She must have white witnesses. And how is she to have them in such a case?

That element of marriage by which the bodies of husband and wife are mutually pledged, (and as far as law can do it, secured,) to each other and to no one else, has no existence to the slave; and it is nullified by the act of the Church equally with that of the State. Both these unite in putting asunder those whom God hath joined together.

But again. Marriage is a union for mutual help as well as mutual love. It implies a community of interest not less than of affection. If a man is to forsake even his father and mother that he may cleave unto his wife, how much more are all *other* relations to be ranked as subordinate to this? It is the obvious duty as well as the right of a husband to provide for the defence, and security, and comfort, and happiness of his wife, before those of any other human being. But slavery not only disregards this duty and this right, but undertakes to reverse them. Instead of allowing the natural rights and duties of this relation to the slave man and woman who wish to live together in mutual love and help, the master claims the whole time and the whole labor of both as his right, as well as their bodies as his property. If, as very frequently happens, he allows them a small piece of ground, and a certain portion of time to cultivate it, he calls this an indulgence. It is entirely within his power to give or not to give it. Just as he may or may not, as he

pleases, claim the body of the slave woman for the gratification of his lust, just so he may, if he pleases, expend the whole time and strength of both man and woman in promoting his pecuniary interest. The civil law expressly authorizes both these acts of enormous injustice, and the Church so nicely conforms her rules to the slaveholder's convenience, that if he chooses to commit either, or both of these sins, he can do it with absolute impunity. Neither slave man nor slave woman is allowed to testify against him.

But, it is said, the Gospel is preached to the slaves, and certainly the Gospel has much to say of the mutual duties of husbands and wives. Do the masters prevent their slaves from fulfilling the very duties which the Scriptures enjoin? Alas! read the following testimony, consider the trustworthiness and the competence of him who gives it, and then say—*Is the Gospel preached to the slaves?*

Dr. Nelson, author of the well-known work on Infidelity, published by the American Tract Society, after a residence of more than forty years in North Carolina, and an intimate acquaintance with slavery, says:

"I say what I know when I speak in relation to this matter. I have been intimately acquainted with the religious opportunities of the slaves—in the constant habit of hearing the sermons which are preached to them. And I solemnly affirm that, during the forty years of my residence and observation in this line, I never heard a single one of these sermons but what was taken up with the obligations and duties of slaves to their masters. Indeed, I never heard a sermon to slaves but what made obedience to masters by the slaves the fundamental and supreme law of religion. Any candid and intelligent man can decide whether such preaching is not, as to religious purposes, *worse than none at all.*"

Is it strange then that the slaves are degraded? The Synod of South Carolina and Georgia only declared a natural and necessary result of the slave system, when they said that the slaves were "in the condition of heathen—and in some respects, in a worse condition. Their moral and religious condition is such, that *they may justly be considered the heathen of this Christian country.*" And yet every member of this Synod continues to uphold the laws above described, in Church and State, by which this heathenism is perpetuated.

HOW DOES SLAVERY AFFECT THE MARRIAGE RELATION IN THE CASE OF THE SLAVEHOLDER?

1. Slavery discourages marriage among young men, by

first keeping them familiar, from childhood, with impure ideas, sights, language, and habits, and then providing, for the persons thus corrupted, a free indulgence of the sexual appetite without marriage.

A singularly calm and moderate writer, whose accuracy is entirely unquestioned, gives the following testimony in a book just published:*

"A gentleman in an inland Southern town said to me: 'I have now but one servant. If I should marry, I should be obliged to buy three more, and that alone would withdraw from my capital at least 3,000 dollars.'"—p. 600.

"A planter told me that the practice [of licentious connection with slave women] was not occasional or general, it was *universal*. There is not, he said, a likely looking black girl in this State, that is not the paramour of a white man. There is not an old plantation, in which the grandchildren of the owner are not whipped in the field by his overseer."—p. 602.

Dr. Parsons, of Windham, Maine, another competent and reliable witness, testifies:†

"The female slave cannot be otherwise than degraded. Subjected at all times to the passions of the whites, chastity and refinement are out of the question. They are stripped entirely naked to be punished, not only on the plantations, but by the city marshals in the cities, to whom the masters send them for this purpose. And often they are exposed in public for sale in the same condition."—p. 295.

Upon this last point we have the testimony of Rev. T. W. Higginson, a well-known clergyman of Worcester, Mass., who, in a letter to the New York Tribune, July 2d, 1856, tells what he saw and heard in Mr. Corbin Thompson's negro-yard in St. Louis. A gentleman of that city had just concluded a bargain for a colored girl.

"'Girl is sound, I suppose?' carelessly inquired the purchaser.

"'Wind and limb,' responded the trader. '*But strip her naked and examine every inch of her if you wish,*' he quickly added; '*I never have any disguises with my customers.*'"

The last evidence to be presented upon this point is the testimony of a Northern lady of high intelligence and excellence, well known to the writer of these pages, who found, in the course of her residence in various slave

* "A journey in the sea-board slave States: by Frederick Law Olmstead, author of Walks and Talks of an American farmer in England."

† "Inside View of Slavery, or a Tour among the Planters. By C. G. Parsons, M. D. With an Introductory Note by Mrs. H. B. Stowe."

States, not only such amazing depravity in their social system, but such an amazing acquiescence in it on the part of women as well as men, that, after returning to the North, she wrote a tract, entitled "Influence of Slavery upon the White population." She says, page 7th,

"But why should we expect purity, when every restraint is removed which helps to subdue the clamors of the animal nature, while every possible opportunity is offered for its indulgence.

"There is no fear of public opinion, for there is no danger of detection, since the slave is bound to submit in silence.

"There is no loss of social position consequent upon the grossest licentiousness.

"The most honorable social and political distinctions are awarded without reference to the private character of the individual.

"The libertine maintains a high and honored standing in the church.

"The law decrees that every child born of a slave shall follow the condition of its mother, and thus not only extends no protection to virtue, but offers a premium to vice.

"Nor is one class of society more base than another in this respect. The highest social life is often the most vile in its secret history. A young man at the age of twenty-one takes possession of his portion of the paternal estate, and erects a house upon it, where he retires and establishes a household for himself. He secures what means of gratification his taste can select, and thus lives sometimes ten or fifteen years, if no heiress or beauty cross his path, of sufficient attractions to induce him to add her as an ornamental appendage to his establishment. Meanwhile his human "property" steadily increases, both in numbers and value; for the lighter the mulatto the more desirable among the fastidious; and rare beauty is often the result of a *second* intermingling of the same aristocratic blood with the offspring of a former passion. From time to time, friends come to visit this bachelor hall, and in due season the master is repaid for his hospitality to them by a valuable addition to his stock of human chattels.

"If in due time a wife be wooed and won, what is she? Nothing but "the fairest among his concubines." She is not his *wife*; and if she deserve the name of *woman*, her fate is a living death."

This brings us to the topic next in order, namely;

2. Slavery destroys both the peace and the purity which properly belong to marriage, by complicating it with innumerable adulteries.

Read upon this point the unimpeachable testimony of a Southern lady,* Mrs. Margaret Douglas of Virginia.

* The Personal Narrative of Mrs. Margaret Douglas, a Southern woman, who was imprisoned for one month in the common jail of Norfolk, under the laws of Virginia, for the crime of teaching free colored children to read: pp. 65.

"I now approach a subject vitally connected with the interests of the South and the welfare of humanity. In doing so, I tell my Southern sisters a truth which, however they may have learned it by sad experience, has probably never been thus presented to them before. *In this truth is to be found the grand secret of the opposition to the instruction of the colored race.* In this truth also lies the grand secret of the discontent and rebellion among the slaves. Knowing this, it is easy to perceive why such strenuous efforts are made to keep the colored population in darkness and ignorance. * * This subject demands the attention, not only of the religious population, but of law-makers and statesmen. It is the one great evil hanging over the Southern slave States, destroying domestic happiness and the peace of thousands. It is summed up in the single word, *amalgamation*. This, and this only, causes the vast extent of ignorance, degradation and crime, that lies like a black cloud over the whole South. And the practice is more general than even Southerners are willing to allow. It pervades the entire society. Its followers are to be found among all ranks, and occupations, and professions. The white mothers and daughters of the South have suffered under it for years—have seen their dearest affections trampled upon, their hopes of domestic happiness destroyed, and their future lives embittered even to agony, by those who should be all in all to them, as husbands, sons, and brothers. I cannot use too strong language in relation to this subject, for I know that it will meet with a heartfelt response from every Southern woman. I would deal delicately with them if I could, but they know the fact, and their hearts bleed under its knowledge, however they may have attempted to conceal their discoveries. Southern wives know that their husbands come to them * * * from the arms of their tawny mistresses. Father and son seek the same sources of excitement, scarcely blushing when detected, and recklessly defying every command of God, and every tie of morality and human affection."

Can the white men of the South be *expected* to be pure, growing up in the midst of temptations such as we have described? Can the marriages of slaveholders *ever* be what they should be, while the laws, both of Church and State, so expressly secure indulgence to the lust of the eye and the lust of the flesh? Is it not yet time to direct our thoughts and efforts to the entire overthrow of slavery?

We have seen that the establishment, by law, of absolute, irresponsible power on one side, and entire subjection on the other, annihilates, to the slave, the relation of husband and wife, and poisons it to the slaveholding family by infidelity, suspicion, contention, and the intensest bitterness of feeling. We have now to inquire, how does slavery affect the relation of

PARENT AND CHILD.

We will take it for granted, that the principles properly regulating this relation, are found in the following precepts of Scripture.

"Train up a child in the way he should go."

"Children, obey your parents in the Lord."

Let us first look at this relation as it exists in the slave family.

The proper training up of a child requires, on the part of the parent, intelligence, a moral and religious character, a recognized authority, and a power to seclude the child from external vicious or otherwise injurious influences.

The very mention of these constituent parts of the parental relation, shows how impossible it is for the slave father or mother to exercise them.

The means of knowledge are forbidden by law to both parent and child. In respect to morality and religion, we have seen the testimony of the Synod of South Carolina and Georgia, (and pages more such might be quoted, had we space,) that the slaves "may justly be considered heathen," and the testimony of Rev. Dr. Nelson, that the sermons generally preached to the slaves are, "as to religious purposes, worse than none at all." The authority of a slave father or mother over their child is not recognized by the slaveholder in the slightest degree. They all, father, mother, and child, are the *property* of the slaveholder. The assumption, for a moment, of a right on the part of the slave parent to give, or of the child to obey, a direction contrary to the will of him who claims to *own* them both, would be treated as rebellion and insufferable insolence combined. Shall *property* say unto the owner who holds, directs, and controls it, Why dost thou direct me thus? And as to the power of withdrawing a child from unhealthy employment or vicious influences, or profligate companions, the son of the slaveholder may be the very worst associate for the daughter of the slave; but how is the slave to help either himself or his daughter? Both of them are utterly helpless, clay in the hands of the potter, even when they know that he is determined to mold them both into "vessels unto dishonor." To slaves, the parental relation, like the matrimonial one, is *annihilated*.

HOW DOES SLAVERY AFFECT THE PARENTAL RELATION IN THE CASE OF THE SLAVEHOLDER?

The slaveholder has, undoubtedly, a recognized authority to control his children. Let us suppose that he has also intelligence, such average development of the moral and religious character as is customary in a slaveholding community, and a disposition to withdraw his children from vicious influences. The question is, *Can he do this?* Can he keep them pure and virtuous without sending them permanently away from home? Testimony must answer this question. We want the evidence of intelligent and reliable persons. But this exists in such abundance, that our only difficulty is to find space in this tract for a tenth part of it.

Said Jefferson, as long ago as 1782, speaking of the natural and inevitable tendency of slavery,

"The whole commerce between master and slave is a perpetual exercise of the most boisterous passions, the most unremitting despotism on one part, and degrading submission on the other. Our children see this, and learn to imitate it. The parent storms, the child looks on, catches the lineaments of wrath, puts on the same airs in the circle of smaller slaves, gives loose to the worst of passions, and thus nursed, educated and exercised in tyranny, can not but be stamped by it with odious peculiarities."

The following scene was witnessed and described by Mr. Olmsted. Sea-board Slave States, p. 402 :

"A party of fashionably dressed people took the train to Charleston; two families, apparently, returning from a visit to their plantations. They came to the station in handsome coaches. Some minutes before the rest, there entered the car, in which I was alone, and reclining on a bench in the corner, an old nurse, with a baby, and two young negro women, having care of half a dozen children, mostly girls, from three to fifteen years of age. As they closed the door, the negro girls seemed to resume a conversation, or quarrel. Their language was loud and obscene, such as I never heard before from any but the most depraved and beastly women of the streets. Upon observing me they dropped their voices, but not with any appearance of shame, and continued their altercation until their mistresses entered. The white children, in the mean time, had listened without any appearance of wonder or annoyance. The moment the ladies opened the door they became silent."

Further on, Mr. Olmsted says :

"A large planter told me the reason he sent his boys to the North to be educated, was, that there was no possibility of their being brought up in decency at home. Another planter told me that he was intending to move to a free country on this account.

He said that the practice [of illicit connection with slave-girls] was not occasional, or general, it was *universal*." P. 602.

The tract above referred to, "Influence of Slavery upon the White population," an authority of the very highest class, gives us a full statement of the truth upon this most important subject, as follows :

"The life of mental and physical inactivity that Southern women lead, renders them incapable of a judicious training of their children, and, in general, they seem entirely ignorant of the responsibilities involved in the relation of a mother. They are too essentially indolent to undertake the arduous duty of 'managing' any thing or any body; and thus the precious years of infancy are committed to the most ignorant or malicious hands.

"As soon as the little one is old enough to seek playmates, his foster brother and the little negroes near his age are his constant companions. They become next the instructors of his youth, and their language, habits, and manners form the strongest associations of his childhood.

"Meanwhile, 'human nature' begins to show itself with considerable vigor. The little master gets angry with his playmates; he fights and beats them, while they are *never* to strike back. His little foster brother, who is generally presented to him for a body-servant, becomes his favored victim. He beats him the most because he is his constant companion, and oftenest offends him; and the enslaved brother is taught that he must bear more because he especially belongs to his young master.

"Occasionally a mother corrects her son, and begs him not to strike, because it is not 'pretty.' But, as a general rule, as soon as the child learns the use of his little fist, he finds it most effectual for his purposes, and in the exercise of ungoverned passion and imperious self-will, the years of childhood prepare the way for the deeper sins of manhood.

"And now I approach a part of my subject from which I would gladly draw back, were I not riveted to the point by my desire to be faithful to my purpose of setting forth the effects of slavery upon the master. It is a painful and delicate office to do justice to this matter; but I speak to the pure in heart, who seek to know and defend eternal truths.

"By a strange misnomer, slavery has been called a 'domestic' institution; but before its presence, all that is properly implied in that word *domestic* vanishes like an exorcised spirit. The desolation wrought among the colored victims of slavery is terrible, and mighty indeed is their demand for redress; but they have their revenge in the wreck of the domestic happiness of their oppressors.

"I have said that the white child is committed entirely to the care of the colored nurse, and thus the process of contamination begins in infancy. Young children are familiarized to sights and associations which destroy the instinctive modesty of youth. They are also placed in such relations to the colored children, through

the ignorance or malice of the nurse, as to stimulate the passions into premature activity. Some nurses believe that personal intimacies between the young master and his young female companions cultivate a closer affection, and insure the latter from the chances of being sold. Others, of a fiercer temper, seek their revenge for outrages committed on themselves in order to exult over the wreck of early manhood always resulting from self-indulgence. By whichever process the result is attained, it is a well-known fact that purity among Southern men is almost an unknown virtue."

We inquire in the next place—

How does slavery affect the RELIGIOUS character of a community, both in general, and in regard to the specific relation of MASTER AND SERVANT?

Dr. Parsons, author of the "Inside View of Slavery," who traveled and resided at the South for the express purpose of personally acquainting himself with the character and influence of that institution, gives full and important testimony on this point, a small portion of which we will quote :

"One of the strangest sights to a New England man, on visiting the Southern States, is the desecration of the Sabbath. In some of the cities, especially if a good number of the business men are from the North, the churches are tolerably well attended—there being but one service for the day. But even here the afternoon and evening are much devoted to amusements. And, in fact, throughout the entire South, with not very numerous exceptions, the Sabbath, instead of being a day of rest, or of worship, is a holiday—occupied mainly in pleasures and sport." P. 254.

"A colporteur of the American Tract Society, writing to the *Maine Christian Mirror*, under date of May 9th, 1854, says: 'In Mississippi, where I am laboring, drinking, gaming, and horse-racing are common on the Sabbath—and the Sabbath is distinguished from other days by the firing of guns.'

"A large majority of the slaves labor on the Sabbath—not usually at the daily task—but they wash and iron, make and mend their garments, cut wood, and work in their gardens.

"But the slaves do not labor for themselves alone. In the planting districts, especially during the busy season of the year, the slaves are not permitted to make the Sabbath even a holiday. Instances are by no means rare, even among masters professing to be Christians, in which the slaves are compelled to labor on the Sabbath as on other days.

"Rev. H. B. Abbott, pastor of the M. E. Church at Augusta, Me., was formerly a counsellor at law in Mississippi. In a letter to me, dated April 10th, 1854, he says: 'I am acquainted with a Baptist preacher in Mississippi who compelled his slaves to labor on the Sabbath, and justified himself under the plea that, if they were not at work, they would be sporting, and roving about the fields

and woods, thereby desecrating the Sabbath more than by laboring under an overseer.'

"I was spending a Sabbath in the city of A. Early in the day I noticed the planters from the surrounding country coming in to attend the morning service. Many of them were members of the city churches. They remained in the city after the meetings were closed, and about noon, or a little later, their slaves began to arrive, with mule-teams, loaded with cotton and other kinds of produce. In the afternoon the stores were opened, and these Christian slaveholders exchanged their produce for groceries, and other commodities, with which they sent their slaves home, while they remained, drinking whisky and cracking jokes, until the cool of the evening." Pp. 225-7.

We will close with two extreme but most thoroughly authenticated instances of the depraving influence of that power which the law gives to every slaveholder, to control and nullify the slave's conscience.

The first is vouched for by a lady extensively and most favorably known, daughter of the late Judge Grimke, of the Supreme Court of South Carolina, and sister of the late Thomas S. Grimke, Esq.:

"A beloved friend in South Carolina, the wife of a slaveholder, with whom I often mingled my tears, when, helpless and hopeless, we deplored together the horrors of slavery, related to me, some time since, the following circumstance:

"On the plantation adjoining her husband's, there was a slave of pre-eminent piety. His master was not a professor of religion, but the superior excellence of this disciple of Christ was not unmarked by him, and I believe he was so sensible of the good influence of his piety that he did not deprive him of the few religious privileges within his reach. A planter was one day dining with the owner of this slave, and in the course of conversation observed that all profession of religion among slaves was mere hypocrisy. The other asserted a contrary opinion, adding, 'I have a slave who, I believe, would rather die than deny his Savior.' This was ridiculed, and the master urged to prove the assertion. He accordingly sent for this man of God, and peremptorily ordered him to deny his belief in the Lord Jesus Christ. The slave pleaded to be excused, constantly affirming that he would rather die than deny the Redeemer, whose blood was shed for him. His master, after vainly trying to induce obedience by threats, had him terribly whipped. The fortitude of the sufferer was not to be shaken. He nobly rejected the offer of exemption from further chastisement at the expense of destroying his soul, and this blessed martyr *died in consequence of this severe infliction.*

SARAH M. GRIMKE."

"A few days since," says a late writer in the *Boston Congregationalist*, "a most affecting fact was stated to us by the Rev. Mr. Alvord. During a residence of several months in Florida, for his health, he was often wont to take exercise by working with the

slaves on the plantation where he was. And having gained their confidence thus, they freely opened their hearts to him as a friend: a thing which slaves do not do to every man, and especially to chance visitors, whom they judge to be in the interest of their masters.

"In one case he called to see a slave who was in confinement for endeavoring to follow his conscience in keeping holy the Sabbath day in the worship of God. By working nights, he actually performed the labor assigned for seven days, and then spent the Sabbath in worship. His master discouraged it, and imprisoned him, and cut and mangled his body with scourges to subdue his will, and compel him to work on the Sabbath. After the wounds began to heal, he would cut them open from time to time, by repeated scourgings. Mr. Alvord saw his wounds, and gazed with painful sympathy upon his honest face, wet with tears, as he told the severity of his trial. At last, after repeated scourgings, his spirit failed, and he submitted to his master's impious will."

The details of evidence which we have given in the preceding pages are important, because *every one* recognizes the value of documentary evidence, and the testimony of reliable eye and ear witnesses; and we all believe, on such authority, statements respecting the customs of a community, the language of ministers, the rules of Churches, and the conduct of Church members, which vary materially from all our own experience. But the *thinking* man sees that all that we have said, and more, flows necessarily and *inevitably* from such an institution as slavery. No human being is fit to be trusted with absolute, irresponsible power; such power as we have seen to be delegated to every master of every slave, by Judge Stroud's abstract of the slave laws. If the best portion of our own community were selected to hold and use such authority, they would very soon become corrupted. What, then, must be the result where all classes in a large community, good, bad, and indifferent, have held and exercised this power for a hundred years; where the laws of the State, the customs of the Church, and the habits of the people have all along been shaping themselves to sustain it; where some ministers, from the pulpit and the press, boldly declare that it is right; where the remainder carefully avoid stigmatizing it as wrong; where the judge on the bench rules that, though clearly unjust, it must be supported while it is law; and where the mass of the people practice it as an admitted custom, little solicitous about either the law or the right; what *then* must slavery be? No less foul, no less wicked, no less destructive to peace, purity, and welfare, in the Family, the Church, and the State, than we have seen it in these pages.

Finally, we have to consider

THE BEARINGS OF SLAVERY ON SOCIETY AT LARGE.

But is not this question already answered? We have seen the effect of slavery upon the family; and society at large is but an

aggregate of families. Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter? The corruption wrought upon the slaveholder in his home can not be laid aside when he goes forth to act in the various relations of social and public life. If the influences which essentially belong to slaveholding relation have made him (as we have seen) a worse husband, a worse father, a worse master, and a worse Church member, they have made him a worse man, and deteriorated his action and his influence in society at large, and in every special relation of it. And the reason is plain. Apart from all the features of slavery that are commonly called its *abuses*—as if the whole of it were not an abuse—its radical, central idea is, both theoretically and practically, *in direct antagonism to Christianity*. By undertaking to make the master's will the *supreme law* to the slave, and by denying to the slave the right to refuse obedience in matters morally wrong, slavery erects itself against God, denies His supremacy, sets up a will in opposition to His, and by accustoming the slaveholder to the practical exercise of his own will as *supreme in power*, and to the recognition of that will (not only by the ignorant slaves, but by the law of the land,) as *supreme in right*, it *inevitably* saps the foundations of morality and religion in his character. Making him a worse man, it *of course* makes him a worse citizen.

If we cannot *touch pitch* without defilement, how much less can we live, and work, and have our daily occupation in it without this result. It is as true of the Family, the Church, and the Community, as of the individual, that whoever would secure peace, internal prosperity and true welfare, must be *first pure*. But slavery of necessity undermines and destroys purity, even in its inmost citadel, the institution earliest established by the Divine love for the promotion of human happiness and welfare, The Family Relation.

Office and Depository of the American Reform Tract and Book Society,
No. 28 WEST FOURTH STREET.

CINCINNATI, January, 1858.

THE AMERICAN REFORM TRACT AND BOOK SOCIETY, it is believed, is the offspring of necessity, brought into existence to fill a vacuum left unoccupied by most other Publishing Boards and Institutions—its object being to publish such Tracts and Books as are necessary to awaken a decided, though healthful, agitation on the great questions of Freedom and Slavery. This is its primary object, though its constitution covers the broad ground of “promulgating the doctrines of the Reformation, to point out the application of the principles of Christianity to every known sin, and to show the sufficiency and adaptation of those principles to remove all the evils of the world, and bring on a form of society in accordance with the Gospel of Christ. To spread these principles the Society has issued more than twenty Bound Books and forty Tracts, has 3,500 pages stereotype plates on hand, and sends out 6,000 copies of its “Record,” monthly. The Directors feel encouraged in their work, and will increase their efforts just as fast as funds are provided by the friends of the Society. Your aid is respectfully solicited.

GEO. L. WEED, *Corresponding Secretary and Treasurer.*

AMERICAN REFORM TRACT AND BOOK SOCIETY, CINCINNATI, OHIO.

